DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 184 085 CS 005 330

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TITLE A Qualitative Analysis of How Various Primary Grade Teachers Employ the Structured Learning Component of the Direct Instruction Model When Teaching Reading.
INSTITUTION Michigan State Univ., East Lansing. Inst. for Research on Teaching.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (DHEW) Washington, D.C. Teaching Div.
PUB DATE Apr 80
CONTRACT 400-76-0073
NOTE 48p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Boston, MA, April 7-11, 1980).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Beginning Reading; Classroom Research; Observation; Primary Education; *Reading Instruction; Reading Research; *Teacher Behavior; *Teacher Role; *Teaching Styles

ABSTRACT

Observational data on six first and second grade teachers were analyzed qualitatively to determine whether any of these teachers provided "assisted learning" during reading instruction. Assisted learning was defined as the teacher's intentional efforts to structure the students' learning experiences so that they could learn more easily. It was anticipated that some of the observed teachers would display patterns of assistance consistent with both the various outcomes of reading and the several components of instruction, including the concept of assisted learning. Although there was some evidence that two of the teachers displayed patterns of assistance, the overwhelming instructional activity across all six teachers was recitation, which made assistance incidental to the task of completing the activity. In short, most of these teachers taught as if the primary responsibility were on the child to learn rather than on the teacher to teach. (Profiles of the six teachers' case studies are attached.) (RL)

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ED184085

A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF HOW VARIOUS PRIMARY GRADE TEACHERS EMPLOY THE STRUCTURED LEARNING COMPONENT OF THE DIRECT INSTRUCTION MODEL WHEN TEACHING READING

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A Paper Presented at the Annual Conference of the
American Education Research Association
Boston, Massachusetts
April, 11, 1980

The work reported herein is sponsored by the Institute for Research on Teaching, College of Education, Michigan State University. The Institute for Research on Teaching is funded primarily by the Teaching Division of the National Institute of Education, United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the position, policy, or endorsement of the National Institute of Education. (Contract No. 400-76-0073)

CS005330

Process-product studies of teaching indicate that direct instruction is the most efficient model for producing achievement growth in the basic skills (Good, 1979; Medley, 1977; Rosenshine and Berliner, 1978). A central tenet of direct instruction is the focus on time or opportunity to learn: students learn more when they have more time to learn. As a result, there has been much concern recently about generating instructional time. For instance, Brophy (1979) suggests that good classroom management -- which minimizes both off-task student behaviors and the amount of time spent on non-instructional routines -- should be employed to make time available that would otherwise be lost and Durkin (1979), who found that less than 1% of her teachers' time was spent in direct verbal instruction in comprehension, argues that we must allocate more time to this aspect of reading.

This paper, however, looks beyond quantity of time to examine quality. Isn't it possible -- or even probable -- that two classrooms having equal time allocations might produce significantly different achievement results because one teacher uses the time resource to provide different -- and "better" -- instruction than the teacher in the other classroom? In considering Durkin's direct verbal instruction, for instance, isn't it possible that one teacher's verbal instruction might be better than another's?

Background

Quality of instruction includes both the content or processes taught during the allocated time and the manner in which these are taught. While both are important, this paper emphasizes the latter because of the belief that it is teachers' responsibility for pedagogy which distinguishes them from other professionals. While they may also be curriculum builders, managers and parent substitutes to one degree or another and while the nature of classroom life may require that they expend much effort on building esprit de corps and effecting a smooth flow of classroom activity, the teacher's unique professional role is to select and use strategies, techniques and tactics which help students learn.

This concept is implicit in much that is written about instruction. For instance, the direct instruction research implies a "structured learning component" rather than "open" teaching, as illustrated by Good's (1979) call for "active teaching", by Rosenshine's (1979) "high structuring" concept, by Gage's (1978) belief that teachers should facilitate student interaction with instructional material and by the lists of recommended steps that teachers should follow when implementing direct instruction (Anderson, Evertson and Brophy, 1979). Similarly, such help is implied in various models of instruction and learning. Gagne and Briggs (1974), for instance, provide a definition of instruction which includes an event described as "learning guidance", Carroll (1963) accounts for the assistance concept when he includes "quality of instruction" in his model of school learning and Strasser (1967) implies that assistance occurs when teachers use strategies to insure certain student outcomes. Additionally, there is apparent consensus that such help is a dynamic phenomenon; that teachers

consciously select from among a variety of strategies and/or techniques. Thus, Bowles (1973) talks about "decision points" in teaching, Strasser (1977) indicates that the teacher draws "from his tactic repertory" while Anderson, Evertson and Brophy (1979) refer to "on-the-spot instructional decisions".

However, despite this, the number of studies focusing on quantity of time increases while little attention is devoted to the possibility that equity in learning may be tied as much to quality of assistance as to time allocated. Hence, descriptions of how teachers help children learn during allocated time are scarse, as are data describing either the decisions or the decision-making model which teachers presumably employ.

The Problem

This paper has two objectives. First, it examines how primary grade teachers help students learn to read, with such "assisted learning" being viewed as one of the components of instruction.[1] "Assisted learning" is defined as the teacher's intentional effort to teach directly by consciously structuring the student's learning experience so that he/she learns more easily. Consequently, while many teachers may daily create instructional situations in which the learning is presumed to occur incidently rather than directly, such activity is not the concern here. Secondly, this paper examines whether such "assisted learning" is the product of conscious decision-making on the part of the teacher.

The following research questions are posed:

1. In what ways do primary grade teachers provide "assisted learning" to their students during reading group instruction?

   a. What is the generalized plan for assisting students to learn something in reading which they formerly did not know how to do?

   b. What steps do teachers follow in structuring and sequencing such assistance for students?

   c. What are the devices and/or techniques employed by teachers to make the learning easier for students?

   d. Is there a relationship between the type of assistance a teacher provides and the teacher's conception of her instructional role?

2. What evidence is there to suggest that teachers use a rational decision-making model to choose from among alternative types of assistance?

Procedures

This research was conducted within the context of a study of teacher conceptions of reading at Michigan State University's Institute for Research on Teaching in which a team of participant observers conducted naturalistic field studies of eleven elementary teachers in 1977-78 and thirteen primary grade teachers in 1978-79, with these teachers being selected on the basis of their willingness to participate, their particular conceptions of reading,[2] the variety of teaching contexts they represented and their reputations as competent teachers[3] (Bawden, Buike and Duffy, 1979). While teacher conceptions were the primary focus of that study, how teachers utilized their instructional time was also noted and reported (Duffy, 1979). These analyses highlighted the need for qualitative study of observational data to provide descriptions of how teachers provide "assisted learning" and were the genesis for this study.

There was not enough time to do a qualitative analysis of all twenty-three teachers. Consequently, six of the 1978-79 teachers were selected because they taught first or second grade, because their data files were complete and because a previous study (Duffy, 1979) indicated that these teachers represented a variety of time usages. The teachers studied were Teachers #11, #12, #14, #16, #18 and #23. These teachers are described in the attached case studies.

Once the teachers were identified, the data for each teacher were retrieved. These data included the following for each subject:

-- fifteen to twenty sets of field notes completed by the participant observer during periodic observations of the reading period throughout the academic year;

-- computer summaries of the time allocated to activities and content;

-- four audio tapes of reading groups recorded at four points during the academic year;

-- transcripts of four audio-taped interviews with the teacher recorded at four points during the academic year; and

-- case studies of the instructional practices of each teacher written by the participant observer.

To determine the nature of "assisted learning", the field notes and audio tapes of each teacher's interaction with reading groups were analyzed in ten steps. First, the data were read and notations were made in the margins regarding the type of activity being pursued and its relationship to the concept of "assisted learning". After the first reading, the data were read a second time to identify instructional episodes, with each episode defined as the teacher changing the activity (i.e., directing the students to put their papers away and to open their workbooks to a particular page).

The third step was to cut the field notes into separate instructional episodes and to group these into categories (i.e., all examples of group oral reading of basal stories were grouped together, etc.). Fourth, the categories of instructional episodes were read to determine the steps and sequence the teachers followed in assisting learners. Fifth, the categories were read to identify the devices and/or techniques employed by the teacher to make the learning easier for the child. Sixth, the examples of "assisted learning" found in various categories were compared to determine whether a pattern was evident across the various types of instructional episodes. Seventh, the findings were compared to the case studies written by the participant observers and to the results of the computerized time summaries to insure that a logical consistency was evident from one set of data to another. The four interview transcripts for each teacher were then read to answer the question regarding the relationship between the teachers' conceptions of their instructional roles and their pattern of "assisted learning", with each reference a teacher made to instructional role being underlined and all the statements being categorized. The ninth step was to determine whether teachers made decisions regarding alternative types of assistance to use, with the pattern of instructional behavior being examined to identify, first, whether there appeared to be a repetoire of alternatives and, second, whether there was evidence of choices being made among these alternatives. Finally, the results of the above steps were compiled into six mini-case studies (see appendix) which provide descriptions of the teachers and their patterns of "assisted learning" during the reading period.

Findings

It was expected that the observational data would reveal that, while the teachers relied on basal text materials, they nevertheless used different instructional plans when they were teaching something new and that these would be discernible from other instructional activities such as practicing something previously taught or applying what was previously taught to oral or silent reading situations or building interest in reading as a recreational and functional pursuit. Further, it was anticipated that "assisted learning" would be associated primarily with efforts to assist students with new learning; that at such times teachers would deliberately structure simple-to-complex progressions designed to minimize pupil confusion while leading them to an understanding of how to use various language cues when reading. Finally, it was expected that purposes, sets, attenders, modeling, cues and prompts would be selected and used by teachers to make learning easier for pupils. However, as can be seen by examining the attached case studies, the pattern which emerges is quite different.

In the first place, there is very little evidence that any of the teachers intentionally teach anything about reading by first determining that students do not know how to do it and then planning a lesson to teach it. Instead, episode after episode reveals teachers asking students to recite answers to workbook pages and to questions regarding the happenings in basal text stories as if students ought to already know how to read. With the exceptions of Teacher #12 and, to a lesser degree, Teacher #16, the sample teachers apparently do not consciously structure their students' learning experience so that they learn to read more easily. Consequently, we cannot answer the question regarding what generalized plans teachers employ for assisting students to learn but must, instead, report that the prevalent

instructional plan observed in the six classrooms was not designed to assist as much as it was designed to listen to students recite from either workbook exercises or basal text stories.

Similarly, since there is only limited evidence of planned assistance in these classrcoms, the research question about how such assistance is structured and sequenced becomes moot. Instead, it must be reported that, in four of the classrooms, the workbook governed the structure and the sequence of instruction and that question-asking in basal stories governed much of what was observed in the other two (Teacher #12 and Teacher #18). The only exceptions were Teacher #12 and, to a lesser degree, Teacher #16, each of whom evidenced occasional patterns of "assisted learning".

Further, four of the observed teachers (Teachers #11, 14, 18 and 23) do not use techniques designed to make learning easier for students; or, more precisely, they do not employ them before pupils make an error. Instead, they typically listen to students recite without first providing purposes, sets, attenders, modeling or other forms of assistance and then, once the student responds incorrectly, provide feeback in the form of a cue or a prompt. In all cases, these cues and prompts were brief and students were given only limited time to respond, apparently because of the teacher's need to maintain a steady pace throughout the lesson. The remaining two teachers (#12 and #16) also reflect the above patterns much of the time but are distinguishable from the other four because they occasionally plan and teach lessons which are clearly designed to assist students' learning of some aspect of reading.

At first glance, these teachers' conceptions of their instructional roles appear to conflict with what they actually do; they conceive of themselves as having a responsibility for providing assistance but they seldom do.

However, examination of the interviews of all six teachers reveals an unquestioned assumption that basal materials are the essence of the program. Within this context, teacher comments about assistance seem to be made not in reference to "assisted learning" as defined here but, rather, in reference to providing help to a student who makes a recitation error. To a large degree, all six teachers seem to agree that "teaching reading" is "coordinating" (Teacher #11), "pacing" (Teacher #14), "regulating" (Teacher #18) or "overseeing (Teacher #23) student progress through basal materials.

Four of the observed teachers (#11, 14, 18 and 23) cannot be described as decision-makers who choose among types of assistance as defined here since these teachers did not offer such assistance. Instead, they operated within the guidelines of the basal text and its affiliated workbook and, in effect, abdicated instructional decision-making to these materials. Even the cues provided in response to student error do not appear to be chosen from among alternatives as much as they are a habitual pattern repeated in almost exactly the same sequence from episode to episode. Teacher #12, and, to a lesser degree, Teacher #16, are distinguishable from the other four because they do apparently make occasional decisions about when to teach directly, about how to consciously structure such teaching and about when to "skip around" in the basal text and the workbook. It must be pointed out, however, that such "skipping around" seems to be for holding student interest more than for matching instructional need to appropriate material, and that even these two teachers do more basal or workbook recitation than anything else.

Discussion

The findings from these six classrooms help us understand the nature of primary reading instruction and, hopefully, will motivate further study designed to substantiate or refute the patterns reported here. In the meantime, however, the findings stimulate intriguing speculation.

At the center of such speculation is the effectiveness question. Does the quality of assistance provided by teachers have an impact on the achievement of students? It should be understood that the teachers studied here are preceived to be effective by their colleagues and their superiors; they do produce readers and, clearly, some of their students learn despite the apparent lack of "assisted learning". However, would more students learn -- and would more students learn more -- if these teachers offered more assistance? In terms of pupil outcome measures, does Teacher #12 produce more achievement growth in more students because she provides more "assisted learning" during reading groups then Teacher #11? Is this what we mean when we say, "The teacher makes the difference"?

Secondly, these data should prompt us to examine what it is that causes teachers to be labeled "good". These six teachers were all preceived to be "good" but, clearly, most leave something to be desired in terms of how much help they provide to students. As a group, however, they all have the following additional characteristics in common: warm relationships with children, attractive rooms, efficient routine procedures, few discipline problems, good relationships with staff and parents and a positive attitude generally. Perhaps it is a combination of these characteristics, rather than how much help they provide to students, that is the criterion for deciding that they are "good" teachers. While these are all desireable traits, shouldn't quality of assistance also be considered?

Thirdly, what should be the teacher's role in helping students learn? Do teachers have a professional obligation to minimize confusion and error by intentionally structuring student interaction with the learning? Apparently, in the view of some of our teachers, such is not the case. Instead, they appear to believe that students learn by completing commercial materials, that the teacher is "teaching" when he/she asks students to recite from these materials, that an incorrect response is the signal for providing help and that such assistance should take the form of impromptu cues which are brief enough to avoid disrupting the pace of the activity. In fact, if the student does not respond to such cues quickly enough, another students is typcially asked to provide the answer. From such "assistance", the student, at best, heard the answer provided by his peer; however, did he/she learn how to get the answer independently? And, in those cases where the student recites correctly with or without the benefit of such minimal prompts, is the teacher's expectation fulfilled, i.e., one is teaching when one is conducting recitation? Finally, if recitation is what teaching is all about, do we really need highly trained professional teachers or could paraprofessionals and aides be just as qualified and just as effective?

Fourth, these findings suggest that researchers ought to examine more closely the assumption that teachers operate from a rational model in which they make conscious instructional decisions based on a particular theory of reading and/or a particular information processing model. While these teachers did make conscious decisions about initial grouping patterns early in the school year, on-going instructional decisions were controlled not by the teacher but by the commercial publishing house, with the teacher merely mediating the materials. At the very worst, these data stimulate visions of teachers as script followers who, because of the ecology of the classroom, key on activities rather than on instructional objectives in

order to keep the school day moving smoothly.

Finally, these data suggest that teacher educators must examine closely the assumptions which have traditionally undergirded their work. For instance, reading methods courses tend to emphasize the reading process, the child's individual instructional needs as determined by diagnosis and a rational model of reading and reading instruction. However, such preparation conflicts with classroom reality in which the reading group is the teacher's reference point and maintainance of a fluid continuity is paramount. Thus, teachers are forced to adopt a materials-driven and activity-focused approach instead of the diagnosis-driven, child-focused view presented in the methods class. Conceivably, the result is teachers, such as those in this study, who seldom provide students with the carefully structured skill lessons or directed reading lessons which they were taught to use in methods classes and who cannot organize or manage those affective reading activities which typically occur outside the framework of commercial materials. Instead, there is a preponderance of recitation. Perhaps it is this conflict that teachers are referring to when they say that their teacher education programs are irrelevant to the demands of the real world.

Conclusion

This study was based on the assumption that learning how to read demands not only time to learn but quality assistance from the teacher as well. It was anticipated that some of the observed teachers would display patterns of assistance consistent with both the various outcomes of reading and the several components of instruction, including the "assisted learning" concept

defined here. While there was some evidence that Teacher #12 displayed some of these patterns and that Teacher #16 evidenced a lesser amount, the overwhelming instructional activity across all six teachers was recitation in which assistance was incidental to the task of completing the activity. In short, most of these teachers taught as if the primary responsibility was the child's to learn rather than the teacher's to teach and as if the goals of reading instruction will take care of themselves as long as you get the students through the material.

These data are consistent with the patterns suggested in the seventeen other case studies which are part of our original teacher population, with Durkin's (1979) report of a paucity of instruction generally among her teachers and with Hodges' (1980) re-categorization of Durkin's data which indicates that 70.1% of comprehension instruction reflects teacher response to student error rather than direct assistance in ways which minimize confusion.[1] Further, these findings support other studies which indicate that teachers are activity-driven rather than objective-driven (Morine-Dershimer, 1979; Sendelbach and Smith, 1980) and that they make few instructional decisions beyond the preactive stage (Buike, 1980; Yinger, 1978). The implication is clear: we should look more closely at the kind of help teachers provide and the way various kinds of assistance effect student outcomes.

Notes

1. Hodges (1980), in a commentary on Durkin's (1979) work on comprehension instruction, argues for viewing instruction as "a set of external events" and provides six categories of such events. The "assisted learning" concept discussed here includes three of the categories cited by Hodges (her second, third and fourth) in which the teacher acts to minimize learning difficulty by consciously assisting learners but does not include her first category or her last two, all of which focus on feedback provided in response to student errors.

2. Teacher conceptions were determined by administration of a Propositional Inventory (Duffy and Metheny, 1979) and by interviews.

3. Schools were selected using Michigan State Education Department data regarding SES and by school policy regarding instructional/curricular mandates.

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Mini-Case Study

Teacher #11

Background

Teacher #11 is in her early thirties and has had six and a half years experience teaching first, third and fourth grade in various communities. Currently, she is a first-grade teacher in a rural area near a large mid-western city. She has 22 pupils and she evidences a lively rapport with them.

Instructional Goals in Reading

Teacher #11's reading goals focus on word recognition and, more specifically, phonics. This emphasis is clear in the following statement which she made in response to a question regarding her basal series:

> I feel I'm not terribly familiar with this series as it is my first experience with the series but it seems, so far, that they depend a great deal on context and I think that's fine but I want them to also have a broad background in phonics so if they see a word in isolation they will have some sense of how to attack it.

These values are reflected in her use of time: she spends 65% of her reading time on word recognition, 15% on comprehension and she was never observed developing the affective dimensions of reading through book sharing or other recreational reading activities.

Role of Materials

Teacher #11 is strongly committed to the use of a commercial basal reader. She uses the program daily and states that she depends upon it. As she says:

> I feel other people are better qualified to determine exactly what should be included in a first-grade program so if we pick out a good basal, we have those skills all laid out for us . . .

> I feel that people who write basal series have more expertise than I. I need a good basal series. . . I think that you should follow the sequential course of activities that they have laid out.

Typical Activities

As might be expected from the above, Teacher #11's typical activities revolve around the use of the basal text. More specifically, however, they revolve around the workbook associated with the basal: only 7% of her time during reading was used for guided reading of the basal stories and, of 64 instructional episodes identified in the field notes and audio tapes, only six involved guided reading of basal stories while 36 focused on workbook activities. When using the workbook, Teacher #11 takes pupils through the pages item by item using a recitation procedure. A similar procedure is used when she uses non-workbook practice activities such as flash cards, phonic games, pocket charts and dittoes (13 instructional episodes).

Conception of Instructional Role

Teacher #11 sees herself as a person responsible for helping children practice the material associated with the workbook and she believes that repetition is very important. As she said in describing her instructional role: "Well, to use the material, to make it fun, to make it interesting. To notice what the children are having difficulty with and perhaps give them more practice in that area". While she mentions the need to "give them various modes of attack", she does not specify how this should be done.

All her comments about her job as an instructor are tied to the commercial program. Specifically, she sees herself as monitoring pupil progress through material, saying about her role: "To, you know, progress at a rate that doesn't overpower them but is still stimulating, challenging". To facilitate this role, she looks for material which is "self-directed" and which provides "immediate feedback on how they did." In sum, she sees herself as "a kind of a coordinator" of the pupils' progress through the material.

Her view of her role is particularly clear when she talks about the differences between working with the poor and good readers. Of the poor readers, she says, "The lower group is more frustrating because you have to explain something a number of different ways. . ." Of the top group, she says,

> ". . . they are just able to be more independent. For example, the workbook pages. I can explain them to them as a group activity, you know, here on the rug, and then they can do them themselves. And we don't spend time reading through each workbook page, either".

Patterns of "Assisted Learning"

Teacher #11 relies heavily on one generalized plan for reading instruction. This is basically a recitation procedure, usually involving workbook pages but occasionally involving teacher-made materials.

Normally, the teacher will take the pupils through the material item by item; she will pose questions and the pupils answer them. The following example is typical:

Teacher: Would you please turn to page 14? Would you look in the first box on the left? What is the first thing you see?

Pupil : m

Teacher: What is next?

Pupil : Mice

Teacher: What is next?

Pupil : m

Teacher: What kind?

Pupil : Big m

Teacher: Not big, but what?

Pupil : Capitol

Teacher: Very good. Would you underline the pictures that belong in the first box?

Pupils : (fill in the workbook)

Teacher: Would you tell us, Nick, what did you underline?

Nick : (responds)

Teacher: Jody, tell us what pictures are in the next box?

Jody : (responds)

Teacher: Now let's all say them.

When a pupil does not recite correctly, Teacher #11 will provide a cue. For instance, the following is typical:

Teacher: I will say some words and you tell me if they begin with an f. Fish, doughnuts.

Pupil : Yes

Teacher: Think about it. Listen. Fish. Doughnuts. Is it fish, foughnuts?

Pupil : No

Teacher: Good.

Similar patterns are evident in other activities. For instance, the following pocket chart activity if typical:

Teacher: OK. I'm going to put some letters in my pocket chart. Who has one just like my first one? Okay, Paul, what is it?

Pupil : n

Teacher: N. What kind of N?

Pupil : Capital

Teacher: Capital n. Good for you. Okay, what's that one?

Pupil : p

Teacher: What kind?

Pupil : Little

Teacher: Little p. What's that?

Pupil : (inaudible response)

Teacher: Small u. What's that?

Pupil : Capital.

Teacher: Capital z. Good for you.

When Teacher #11 guides pupils in the reading of basal stories, she usually follows a pattern of first reviewing what had been read on the previous day, silent or oral reading and asking comprehension questions. Again, a recitation model if utilized, with cues provided in response to oral reading errors:

Teacher: Let's start right in and read to the big spaces like we usually do, okay? Craig?

Craig : (reads orally)

Teacher: What was that? There's? E at the end makes what?

Craig : (reads orally)

Teacher: (correcting error) And they taste. . . the first e's long.

Pupil : (reads orally)

Teacher: Okay. Who can tell me what was the first thing that Toad said about the cookies?

Pupil : (responds)

Teacher: Good for you. Read it.

Pupil : (reads)

Teacher: Good. Now, what's the second thing he said about the cookies? Paul, let's see if you can find it.

Summary

Teacher #11 sees her role as "coordinating" pupil progress through commercial reading materials which are, she believes, written by people more dependable than she in determining the content and activities pupils should pursue in reading. She concentrates on the skill books rather than the stories and she literally "takes pupils through the material," especially the slow readers. She offers assistance in response to errors pupils make when reciting; such assistance is usually in the form of briefly stated cues and prompts. This is apparently what she means when she says she provides "various modes of attack" when pupils have difficulty.

Mini-Case Study

Teacher #12

Background

Teacher #12 has twenty-one years of experience teaching primary grade children in a variety of locations, including overseas. She has a Master's degree and teaches a first grade in a high socio-economic suburb of a large mid-western city. She has sixteen pupils in her class and she has a warm and sincere relationship with them.

Instructional Goals in Reading

Teacher #12's major goal is to have happy children who are strongly interested in reading. She believes that if children are motivated, they will be looking for things to read. As she states, "So I believe having a child well motivated and really wanting to read is the only way you can teaching reading." She tries to accomplish this goal by providing interesting material, by seeing that everyone receives equal attention and by providing a variety of activities. She sums up her goals by stating that she wants to get "everyone to love reading."

Role of Materials

The teacher relies primarily on basal text books in teaching reading. However, she thinks basals could potentially be boring so she strives to create pupil motivation to read them by choosing a variety of different series and by not having all the reading groups go through the same stories. She does not have her pupils follow the workbook page by page and she only uses the teacher's guide for "clues and things".

Typical Activities

Teacher #12's reading program includes reading groups, individual reading of self-selected books and special skill groups. However, most of her time is spent either in word recognition instruction (37%) or in guided reading of basal stories (37%). Of 63 instructional episodes noted in the field notes and audio tapes, 21 were associated with reading basal stories, 14 were associated with games practicing word recognition skills and 6 were with workbook activities which focused on word recognition. Many of the instructional activities are fun-oriented as part of Teacher 12's attempt to keep the pupils interested. As she says:

> I decided that to bring in these other things, that it was more fun and they look forward to what are we going to do in reading today. . . Oh, yes. We play games. . ., sing alphabet jingles, and games, drama, we have centers, we have records. They listen through earphones and they really help for the vowel sounds because after I teach them we have a tape that has the vowel sounds.

Conception of Instructional Role

Much of Teacher 12's instructional role is a reaction against an overseas teaching experience where she was forced to teach by "the rote method". As she says:

> . . . I thought the children in our country were happier because it wasn't . . . you know, everybody didn't have to recite and I felt sorry for the children over there and when I came back here I thought I would just have to have happier children.

Her attempts to motivate children are tied to materials. She attributes the overseas experience to the fact that "they didn't have materials like we do over here" and she states that the way to make reading more interesting is to have a variety of materials in the form of several basal series and a variety of game-like activites.

She also tries to motivate by breaking down the teacher-pupil barrier, saying:

> I don't like the word "instructor". I would rather have. . . we use the word "helper" in our room so that they can feel free to come to me anytime. I don't say usually that I'm the teacher.

As such a helper, she considers herself to be a "guidance person" because she wants them "to feel that we're learning together. . ."

When questioned about how she teaches word recognition skills, she says, ". . . you introduce the skills and play a few games and, before you know it, they're ready to attack new things." She states that her strategy for teaching comprehension is to ask questions.

Patterns of "Assisted Learning"

Teacher #12's most common pattern for reading instruction is guided reading of the basal text stories. In this plan, the reading group and the teacher read the story together. The following is typical:

> 9:58 Calls Tom and Susan to the table. She points to the board and says, "What is this word?" Kids say, "Goober." She asks if they know what this is. She then shows them a real peanut and asks them if they know how they grow. They don't. She explains and then directs them to other questions about the basal story which are written on the board. She says that they should read to answer the questions.

10:02 The first boy begins to read orally. At the end of the first page, they discuss the answer to the first question. Then she says, "Now let's see if we can answer the next question". The girl reads orally. They discuss the answer.

10:05 The pattern continues: oral reading, answering questions, noting the next question, the next kid reads orally, etc.

As a pupil reads orally, Teacher #12 may interrupt when a word is miscalled, as in the example below:

Pupil : (makes oral reading error)

Teacher: What kind of puppy?

Pupil : Get

Teacher: Uh, uh.

Pupil : Get good puppies.

Teacher: Good. Would you read that line over for me?

Much of the reading of basal stories is combined with puppet making and other activities to make the stories more interesting. Also, Teacher #12 frequently assigns pupils to character parts in the story so that they can "dramatize" it.

Another frequent pattern for instruction is the use of games in which children review and practice various word skills. The following is typical:

9:35 E. Call "Cats" to the reading table. She reminds them that they finished their book on Friday. She reminds them that they were to have taken the book home for reading to their families and they discuss this for a moment. Then she says, "Now I want to see if you know all the words from that reader we finished. We are going to play a game using these words." She pulls out a board game with a stack of word cards. Each kid gets a turn picking a word from the pile and if they say the word correctly, they can move their disc one space. They start playing the game. E. supervises, saying, "Now it is Teddy's turn," etc.

9:40 One kid gets stuck on a word. E. says, "What is the beginning letter? What do you suppose that letter says?"

9:42 Another kid gets stuck on a word. E. says, "Let's see if one of our friends can help us."

9:43 E. says, "I think everyone is ready to go into their next reader because everyone knows their words so well."

A third pattern of instruction for Teacher #12 is planned instructional sequences which are not tied to specific materials. There were 15 episodes of such instruction. Some of these focused on vocabulary development, of which the following is typical:

9:55 E. says, "We are going to have a new word today. This word is duck. What letter does it begin with? Can you find the word that says duck?" She has him read the sentence on the page and to fill in the missing letter in the word duck. They discuss ducks he has seen. Then she has him write the word duck. Then she has him read the sentences orally. She says, "Would you like to take this story home and read it to your mother and daddy? They'd like to see how well you read."

Most of these lessons focused on word recognition, however. The following is typical:

Teacher: Now look and see what I'm going to do with the new word. Our new word today was "jump." How many have their eyes ready to see what happens to "jump"? What did I do to the word "jump", Tom?

Tom : You changed it to "bump."

Teacher: Yes, I put "jump" into "bump." How did I make "jump" say "bump"?

Pupil : Put a "b" in front of it.

Teacher: I had to take the "j" off first, didn't I? And then I put the "b". You look and see what happens now. What did I do to "jump" and "bump"? I made another new word. What new word did I make? Mike?

Mike : Lump

Teacher: Lump. Very good. What did I do to "lump"? I made a new word again. Tammy?

Tammy : stump

Teacher: (continues eliciting responses in a similar manner).

Summary

The distinguishing characteristic of Teacher #12's reading program is her desire to have motivated pupils who enjoy her class and who want to read. She relies heavily on basal textbooks but uses a variety of series so the pupils will not be "bored." She strives to minimize her instructional role by building an atmosphere in which she and the pupils call help each other; however, her use of concrete learning aids and structured skill lessons indicates that she is not instructionally passive all the time. She is, however, less active when guiding group reading of basal stories, where she typically corrects pupil oral reading errors and asks comprehension questions in a recitation format.

Mini-Case Study

Teacher #14

Background

Teacher #14 is a first grade teacher with 12 years of experience at various grade levels and she has earned a Master's degree in Reading Instruction. There are 23 children in her self-contained classroom; they are middle-class, predominately white and live in a small town which is near a large industrial center where most of the familties work. The classroom is very tidy with attrictive art projects and bulletinboards and the teacher's desk is strategically placed so that she may keep her eye on things.

Instructional Goals in Reading

Teacher #14 believes everyone should be taught to read using the basal method, with materials differing only according to their reading levels. She believes in "extensive vocabulary development" starting with "Dolch words" and learning "all of the words that are part of the series." She follows the basal religiously because she feels if she did otherwise her children would be "missing something". The "structure" provided by the basal is sound, she says, because it was written by experts who know what they"re talking about. She is concerned with meeting the individual needs of her children, especially the slower children. Although she tends to be "frustrated by them", she makes sure they get special attention. Teacher #14 spends 50% of her time in guided basal activities and 41% in word recognition activities. In guided basal activities, the emphasis is on oral reading while in word recognition she relies heavily on phonics.

Role of Materials

The local school board has mandated the use of an approved basal series and the teacher follows this guideline. This basal is supplemented by the use of dittos, workbooks, and the comprehension questions in the teacher's manual. When asked about the use of other materials, she said, "No, no, they're very set, they're mandated." Informal worksheets administered daily, rather than standardized tests, are the basis for reading group changes. The teacher feels the basal is the best way to teach reading.

Typical Activities

Sixty of 81 instructional episodes identified in the field notes and audio tapes involved small groups reading basal text stories and 10 of 81 involved the use of workbooks or ditto sheets to practice basal skills. The groups were treated the same with each group getting a minimum of 25 minutes. The teacher did, however, give special attention to children with special needs in an effort to provide for individual differences. At the end of each small group session, dittoes and/or workbook assignments were made and children were excused to complete them at their seats.

Conception of Instructional Role

Teacher #14 believes her role with top readers should be

> . . . as a guide. You have to find material and pace their reading so that they learn something new each day. I think for any group it's just a level of development that you have to be . . . that is your important role. And if you don't do that, you are missing your whole function as a teacher.

With lower children,

> You need more time and more repetition. I really think with the low group you should have reading like in the morning and in the afternoon,. . . I think in the slow group the teacher is important. They need constant guidance.

Regarding comprehension, "I was big on comprehension because that seemed to be the big thing they were stressing in the series. . . understanding what you were reading and getting all the details." In summary, she sees her role as providing "direct instruction" and "guidance".

Patterns of "Assisted Learning"

Teacher #14 demonstrated one generalized pattern of instruction in which she followed the teacher's guide for teaching basal stories, i.e., review old words, introduce new words, oral reading, comprehension questions and dittos and/or workbooks for practice. The recitation format was used in which she asked questions which were triggered by the passage the child had just read. If the child failed to answer a question or made an error while reading orally, she would respond with a prompt designed to provide assistance without disrupting the lesson seriously. A typical prompt for an unknown word is as follows:

Teacher: All go m-m-m. All right. You've got a new word and you read it like this. Mark and David, you read.

Pupil : (responds)

Teacher: Then it puts in words, m-m-m.

Pupil : responds

Teacher: Read it, Mark and David.

Pupil : responds

Teacher: All right, got that. Ok, this is m-m-m.

Pupil : m-m-m

Another prompt commonly used with new words is rhyming:

Teacher: Say your new ones (words).

Pupil : may, sock.

Teacher: Yes, rhymes with cow.

Pupil : now.

After an oral reading passage, the teacher regularly follows-up with comprehension questions. For example:

Pupil : (reading orally)

Teacher: Now, who came to pick up Steve?

Pupil : Uncle Will.

Teacher: And where were they going to go, do you think? Do you know?

Pupil : They're going fishing.

Teacher: Yup, that's right. But it didn't tell us. But you know now looking at the pictures. Daddy said that they could go so on went Steve and Uncle Will.

After completing the oral reading portion of the lesson, the teacher typically assigned workbook pages:

Teacher: Okay, you do four pages at your desk. One, two, you don't need your crayons, all you need is your pencil. Go ahead, take the pencil, too.

Pupil : You mean I have to underline. . .

Teacher: Like you did the others. Ok, one is supposed to be colored blue and the other red. You didn't do that.

Teacher: Color 6, color 4, color 5, color 3.

Pupil : Any color?

Teacher: What were you supposed to do yesterday?

Pupil : I forgot to do it.

When workbook assignments weren't used, the teacher would substitute ditto sheets to practice the skill accompanying the basal lesson.

Summary

Teacher #14 relies on the basal text with support from workbooks and ditto assignments. She follows a recitation pattern as she guides each reading group through the same material. When the child makes a reading error or fails to answer comprehension questions, she provides prompts designed to assist the child in correcting the mistake. The basal stories are the basis for new vocabulary words, oral reading practice and demonstrating reading competence by answering comprehension questions.

Mini-Case Study

Teacher #16

Background

Teacher #16 is a first-grade teacher with 8 1/2 years of experience. Her school is located in a suburb of a large mid-western city and the pupils come mainly from blue collar homes. She has a warm and friendly relationship with her pupils and is frequently seen playing her guitar and leading the class in singing.

Instructional Goals in Reading

Teacher #16 has two primary instructional goals: her ultimate goal is to have pupils enjoy and use reading but she feels they first need the basic skills. As a result, she spends 25% of her reading time on the affective dimensions of reading such as book sharing but also spends 37% of her time on word recognition, particularly phonics. Because she believes that word attack skills are prerequisite to comprehension, she spends little time on direct comprehension instruction. However, she does have her pupils do a lot of writing in the belief that this aids their reading comprehension.

Role of Materials

Teacher #16 uses both a basal text program and a supplementary phonics program. While she follows the phonics program closely at the beginning of the school year, she is more flexible with the basal, i.e., she does not move pupils automatically from story to story or from book to book and views the teacher's guide as a starting point. Similarly, she says, "I'm not a fantastic workbook person. . . so I'm just going to skip through it and do what I want to do with it."

Typical Activities

Despite her flexible approach to the basal, she spends a majority of her reading time using such commercial materials. For instance, of 52 instructional episodes noted in the field notes and audio tapes, 22 were in workbook-related activities and 12 were in reading basal stories. In addition, she spends time practicing skills using home-made materials such as games (six observed episodes) and building interest in reading through book sharing activites (seven observed episodes). At the beginning of the school year, the typical activity was whole group instruction using the supplemental phonics program which emphasized activities such as diacritically marking vowel sounds. By December, the typical activity became small group work emphasizing basal stories and related workbook activities.

Conception of Instructional Role

Teacher #16 is a strong believer in the structure provided by commercial programs. She believes that the basal text is an integral part of a good reading program, as is indicated by her response to a question regarding why she uses it: "It probably gives me some structure. . . I don't know what I'd do if I didn't". She often states that pupils need to be taught the skills and that the job of the teacher is to decide which skills to teach and then to teach them.

Simultaneously, however, Teacher #16 believes that much can be learned from less structured situations. She provides for oral sharing time and writing-copying activities because such activities "give them [pupils] an idea of what makes sense;" she frequently reads to them because "I think there's a lot of reading that I teach just in the things like I did this afternoon, the books I read;" and she spends time singing with her pupils

because ". . . I think there's memory involved, there's vocabulary . . ., there's sentences, patterns. . . A little bit like Bill Martin said: 'It repeats itself'."

Teacher #16 is more structured in the decoding area where she has specific materials to use and a clearer sense of the content to cover. She associates the unstructured activities with comprehension, an area she is less sure of, as evidenced below:

> I believe that comprehension should be taught by asking questions about the basal text. But you're not really teaching it by asking questions. I don't know. It has something to do with it but, in a way, it's deeper. They've already done it if they answer the question. You do a lot with sentences and meaning in sentences . . . so they've gotten a lot of patterns and ideas of what comprehension is besides that . . . I don't think that's the only thing I do even though I can't say the exact list of what I do do.

Patterns of "Assisted Learning"

Teacher #16 demonstrated three generalized patterns for instruction. The most prevalent was a workbook recitation mode (22 episodes) which she directed pupils through the materials item-by-item and had them provide the answers. The second was a directed basal reading lesson (12 episodes). The third was a teacher structured lesson (5 episodes).

In the workbook situation, the procedure would typically be as follows:

> Teacher: Open to page 26. Look at the words in the box and see how many you know.
>
> Pupil : (pronounces the words but makes some mistakes).
>
> Teacher: Read the first one and see if truck or mouse go in the blank. Mary, what do you think?
>
> Mary : Truck
>
> Teacher: Ok, read it to us with truck in it.

Mary : (reads the sentence and realizes that it is incorrect).

Teacher: Bob got it right because he took more time to look for the right word.

On occasion, Teacher #16 will respond to an incorrect pupil response by providing cues, as in the following:

Pupil : (provides incorrect response)

Teacher: Look at it. Sound the first part.

Pupil : (response)

Teacher: (pointing to word) Almost. What happens to the o sometimes? It has two parts, the first one's ho - (Teacher exaggerates sound).

Pupil : (no response)

Teacher: Can you help him, Michael?

When using the basal stories, Teacher #16 may have the pupils read orally earlier in the year and silently later in the year. In either case, the typical pattern is as follows:

Teacher: (passing out basal books). We're going to read this story and we should know those words -- walking and walker. Ok. What's the story called? Read the first part, Mary, so we know who's going to tell the story.

Pupil : (reads orally)

Teacher: Ok, so Mr. Smith is going to tell the story. Read that long part and see if you can find out who he's talking about.

Pupils : (read silently)

Teacher: Mary, who's this story about?

Mary : (responds)

Teacher: Does anyone know what a flying squirrel looks like?

Pupils : (no response)

Teacher: (shows picture of a flying squirrel from a library book and explains how it is different from a regular squirrel).

Teacher: What happened to those flying squirrels in the story?

Pupils : (respond)

Teacher: You can go ahead and finish the story.

On the occasions when Teacher #16 structured her own lessons, she focused on some form of word attack, developed a simple-to complex progression, used the chalkboard and led the pupils gradually to the point where they could perform the task independently in the workbook or other situation. The following is a typical sequence:

Teacher: This is a little word you know. The word is in. (She writes the word on the board and has pupils write it on their paper).

Pupils : (copy word on their paper)

Teacher: We're going to write words that look like in but have different beginnings.

Teacher: (write bin on board). This looks like in but has a b in front. Write bin, like Mrs. _____ put a scrap of paper in the bin.

Pupils : (copy the word)

Teacher: (writes fin under the other words). What happens if I do this? The fish the little boy in the story caught had fins.

Pupils : (respond by saying the word).

This type of sequence continues with more and more pupil response to succussive - in words which Teacher #16 places on the board until she determines that they are ready to be placed in the workbook where this skill is practiced.

Summary

Teacher #16 attempts to build a reading program which is a conscious blend of structured phonics emphasis on the one hand and unstructured development of language and reading interests on the other. However, the instructional activites which hold the program together are those structured tasks associated with the basal and the related workbook. While she says that it is her job to determine what skills are needed and to teach them, she is seldom seen making a distinction on the basis of need but, rather, tends to emphasize the workbook skills with all. While she occasionally will develop her own instructional episode, her teaching is more typically embedded in the workbook activity, in which she will provide cues to pupils if they fail to recite correctly.

Mini-Case Study

Teacher #18

Background

Teacher #18 is a 35 year old second grade teacher with 12 years of experience. She has four minority youngsters and 23 white children who come from low-middle class socioeconomic backgrounds and attend a school in a predominately middle-class suburban community. Her room is organized into a traditional row pattern and includes two LD children who are mainstreamed but sit apart from the other children. The teacher strives to motivate her children by promoting a "family type" atmosphere in the classroom.

Instructional Goals in Reading

Teacher #18 sees reading as a progression through the mandated basal series supported by learning the basic skills of reading. She believes that "emphasis should be on decoding skills more so than comprehension skills in the primary grades". She believes "comprehension can be taught best by asking questions from the basal and the use of seatwork activities." With slow children, she believes its important "not to frustrate them", to start with "phonics" and to "build confidence and love of reading. . . through motivation." The importance of progressing from easy to more difficult material was also noted. She feels faster children are capable of "doing more on their own"; and it is important to move them into an "enrichment and fun basal" as soon as mandated objectives have been achieved. Teacher #18 spends 89% of her reading time on guided-basal activities, 7% on word recognition activities and 1% each on comprehension questions and the affective domains of reading. In guided-basal activities, the emphasis is on oral reading.

Role of Materials

The local school board has mandated that "pupils stay in the approved basal series and achieve continuous growth through progressively more difficult levels". Teacher #18 strictly adheres to this mandate and, thus, describes her program as consisting of "basals, workbooks, dittos and boardwork." Because of her dissatisfaction with the workbook, however -"it does not follow the basal closely enough" - she has augmented the basal series with a phonics workbook which provides more "drill" on reading skills. Additionally, the school board has mandated morning exercises for all children -- during this time, Teacher #18 uses phonics papers and spelling activities which she intergrates with reading activities.

Typical Activities

Of 88 instructional episodes identified in the field notes and audio tapes, 53 involved small group reading of basal text stories. Essentially, the teacher's direct instruction time was spent with the students reading orally from the basal followed by a short question and answer exchange after each child finished the passage. Afterwards, she gives directions

and assigns workbook materials to be completed by the children at their desks. Normally, she spends at least twenty minutes with each reading group; she does, however, spend slightly more time with the bottom group.

Conception of Instructional Role

Teacher #18 believes she should be "more active", "more motivational, encouraging and exciting" with slower children. With them, she has promoted the attitude that "I care and you can read and you're going to be reading and you're going to be so excited about it that you're going to be reading to every aunt and uncle on earth. . . and that's how I like them to feel." For these children, "the comprehension process has to be much, much simpler. . . it has to be an oral type thing where I ask a question and they answer me because they cannot write it down."

She believes her role with high children is "to motivate them, to enrich them, . . . they need more challenge, . . . to direct, to instruct them, to regulate them so they don't go too fast or too slow." She sees herself as leading them into more creative type things -- maybe individualized instruction.

The backbone of her role is oral reading. "I try to have each child read orally somewhere or another everyday because it helps me know how they are really catching up on things and also it's good for them to hear themselves."

In summary, Teacher #18 says, "I see myself as. . . . teacher control. . . I like the children in my control, . . . the younger they are the more control, . . . It's almost like they're asking to be controlled somewhat."

Patterns of "Assisted Learning"

Teacher #18 demonstrated two generalized patterns of instruction: most frequently she would introduce basal stories to children in small groups and have the children take turns reading orally from these stories and, less frequently, she would take the children through a step-by-step series of questions (usually in review of basic skills).

In both instances, a recitation format was used whereby answers to questions were triggered by the reading passage the child had just read orally. When a child failed to answer a question successfully or made an error when reading orally, she would provide a minimal prompt which provided some assistance without seriously interrupting the pace of the lesson. Usually, the prompt would be as follows:

Teacher: What's the cluster in scarry?

Pupil : Car

Teacher: At the beginning. What's the cluster at the beginning?

Pupil : Oh, s-c

Teacher: Ok, what's the word?

Frequently she simply called the child's attention to an error by repeating a word, as in the following:

(reading orally)

Pupil : Last night I put lots of bread near the manhole. Only this time I said, I said give me this. . .

Teacher: give

Pupil : give some of this to your prisoners.

Periodically during oral reading the teacher asked questions about what was happening in the story. When a child failed to answer a comprehension question, the pattern was as follows:

(reading orally)

Pupil : Someplace I'm sure no one has ever been. We'll leave at sunrise. Don't you think that is best? That way not one will see us and follow.

Teacher: What is sunrise? When is sunrise?

Pupil : I am sleeping

Teacher: What happens when you talk to someone at sunrise?

Pupil : They are sleeping

Teacher: Yeah, often you will hear someong say, oh you are sleeping and you are not even hearing what I am saying.

The pattern was similar in the step-by-step instructional sequence. The sequence would usually follow this pattern:

Teacher: Now we are going to Mr. Anteater. How do you think he helps himself, Don?

Pupil : By his long tongue.

Teacher: How do we know he has a long tongue? What would you want to know about him?

Pupil : How it picks up ants from way up there.

Teacher: Ok, very good. How he picks up ants from way in the hole. Look at the picture of him. What does he have that looks so unusual.

Pupil : How he gets ants even if his tongue doesn't reach all the way down to the hole.

Teacher: Tommy, just looking at this picture, what does it make you curious about the way his face is shaped?

Pupil : His nose

Teacher: His nose, what about it?

Summary

Teacher 18 relies heavily on the basal as the means by which the children practice oral reading which, to her, demonstrates reading proficiency. Comprehension is achieved when the children are able to answer questions about the passages being read. She "directs" or "guides" the children through the appropriate basal material using a recitation pattern. When errors are made, the teacher offers a series of prompts designed to provide assistance in correcting the problem. The teacher makes use of dittos , workbooks and phonics workbooks to augment and support her basal reading program.

Mini-Case Study

Teacher #23

Background

Teacher #23 is a first grade teacher with nine years of experience and a nearly-completed Master's degree. She has 24 children in her class and, although she teaches in a university town, the pupils come from lower middle class, as well as upper middle class, homes. The classroom is attractive and orderly, and her relationships with children are convivial.

Instructional Goals in Reading

Teacher #23 believes that decoding is more important than comprehension until the child reaches the higher grades and that it is important to encourage and motivate, especially by showing pupils that "it is easy". However, she says you ". . . group on their skills and the words they can read, not on interest". Sustained silent reading is delayed until late in the school year because "the vocabulary is not there" to allow such reading earlier.

Role of Materials

Teacher #23 defines her program as being the "basal and workbook format". These materials are crutches she used to reassure herself that she is "covering everything" and "giving them enough experiences reading words". She has the pupils read all the basal stories and do all the workbook pages regardless of individual skill competencies or needs.

Typical Activities

Teacher #23 spends 48% of her reading time with word recognition tasks, 18% in guided reading of basal texts, 11% in asking comprehension questions and 8% in the affective dimensions of reading. In word recognition, the emphasis is on letter recognition, letter sounds and words. Of 77 instructional episodes identified in the field notes and audio tapes, 42 utilized the workbook or worksheets and 20 involved group reading of basal text stories. Typically, she spends more direct instruction time with students she views as less competent and simply gives directions and assigns materials to pupils she views as more competent.

Conception of Instructional Role

Teacher #23 believes that the top readers can work independently while the poorer readers need much more attention and assistance in the form of specific skill instruction, of "getting kids to see that it is easy," of breaking learning "down into parts" and of "talking them through it". This is particularly true when teaching word recognition to slow readers, where she sees herself as a "real, step-by-step guider". She is less sure of her role in comprehension instruction, where she sees herself as being haphazard and unsystematic. As she says, "I just, if I ask [questions], it it doesn't work then I have to think in my head, ok, what shall I ask next to get to where I want to go and I don't know what that is". In the end, she sums up her instructional role by labeling herself as a "kids' overseer as they are reading and, you know, miscalling and kind of guiding king of thing".

Patterns of "Assisted Learning"

Teacher #23 demonstrated two generalized plans for instruction: first, she would take pupils item by item through the workbook pages and, second, she would introduce basal text stories and have pupils take turns reading orally from these stories. In both cases, the recitation procedure was used in which she asked for answers to questions about the activity on the page. If a child failed to answer a question correctly, she would respond with a minimal cue which provided some assistance while not seriously interrupting the pace of the lesson. Typically, such cues would be like the following:

> "Just the beginning sound. That's what we do in rhyming, just change the beginning".

In all her work with the workbook, Teacher #23 consistently provided directions regarding what to do on a given page. For instance, she would say:

> "Look carefully at these four words before you circle anything and find the two that are the same".

Infrequently, she expanded her direction-giving to provide some form of assistance, as in the following:

> Teacher: Looking at these words -- owl, cow, plow -- what do they all have alike?
>
> Pupil : Thay all have - ow.
>
> Teacher: - ow. And that - ow is going to say - ooowww.
>
> Pupil : - oooowwww
>
> Teacher: It's like someone pinches you -- you go -- ooowww. So when you're figuring out your words, remember that - ow is going to say - ooowww. Now, do these two pages for me, please.

The pattern was similar when using basal stories. Typically, she would begin with the new vocabulary words, normally following a pattern such as the following:

> "We're on our very last story. And there is only one word that I would like for you to put on your word list. That word, right there, called 'footprints', that compound word is what I would like for you to put on your word lists, please. Do you have your word list, Val, in your folder? Then you can copy that right onto your word list".

Occasionally, she would add more structure to this activity. For instance, indicating the word something on the board, she would say:

> Teacher: In the story that you're going to be reading, the kids are going to be making . . .
>
> Pupil : something
>
> Teacher: Something. This is a compound word. It's got the word some and thing. Something.

Once the words were identified, Teacher #23 typically provided some background to the story, usually in a manner similar to the following:

> "You're going to read this story about 'Little Raccoon and the Thing in the Pool'. The two main characters in our story are going to be Little Raccoon and Mother Raccoon. He's going to meet a lot of other people on the way."

After introducing the story, she would usually listen to pupils read orally in turn. If a word is mispronounced, the teacher might say:

> Teacher: Alright, but that's not the word 'small' but it means the same thing as 'small'. It begins with the L sound.
>
> Pupil : little
>
> Teacher: Little, that's right.

Periodically during the oral reading, the teacher asked comprehension questions about what was happening in the story. Once the story was completed and the comprehension questions asked, the group would be assigned other tasks.

Summary

Teacher #23 relies heavily on workbook activities as the vehicle for teaching pupils the word recognition skills she values. She requires recitation of what is contained on the workbook pages and, as she says, "oversees" their progress through this material. While she says she gives assistance in a step-by-step manner, such help is embedded within the workbook activity itself and is usually provided in response to a child's error. She uses the basal stories as a source for new vocabulary, for practicing oral reading and for demonstrating comprehension by answering questions. While the teacher will occasionally make use of games for practice (two episodes) and filmstrips (two episodes), the basal and related workbook activities are clearly the instructional bulwarks of her reading program.